

# 50 Years of SPP: Topics, Trends, Identity

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for 50th Anniversary Session  
at Society for Philosophy and Psychology 2024

# Preamble

- Impostor syndrome: I was 8 in 1974, and didn't start attending SPP until 1990.
- It was wonderful and instantly felt like home.
- I attended most years in the 1990s, but less since then as ASSC took the role of home summer conference for me.
- But SPP still has a big place in my heart.

# Outline

\*1. Data

2. Topics

3. Trends

4. Identity

# Data

- My talk will be almost all data (no a priori philosophy for me!)
- No philosophy, no science, no anecdotes, just a few reflections at the end.

# Dataset: SPP Programs

- SPP website: 1974, 1978, 1979, 1996-2024
- My records: 1990-95
- Usenet archives: 1985-1988
- Total: 41/49 programs (missing 1976-77, 1980-84, 1989).

# Data Processing

- Converted pdf to text files.
- Stripped most text (uncarefully) except the core program with names (and affiliations) of presenters/chairs, plus talk/session titles.
- Processed using Python and Unix shell scripts (with help from ChatGPT!).
- Focused on words of 5 letters or more.

# Outline

1. Data

\*2. Topics

3. Trends

4. Identity

# Most Common Words

university: 1725  
philosophy: 888  
chair: 504  
psychology: 490  
moral: 361  
session: 335  
cognitive: 265  
college: 226  
commentator: 224  
contributed: 212  
invited: 211  
speaker: 189

theory: 182  
science: 181  
symposium: 177  
children: 175  
cognition: 174  
about: 168  
perception: 163  
social: 162  
break: 161  
discussant: 157  
david: 156

(Drop non-topic words.)



# Total Words Per Year

1974:	80		2003:	710	
1978:	243		2004:	2592	
1979:	193	172	2005:	1039	
1985:	542		2006:	1063	
1986:	146		2007:	844	
1987:	591		2008:	1625	
1988:	98	344	2009:	1299	1157
1990:	409		2010:	1263	
1991:	579		2011:	2503	
1992:	406		2012:	996	
1993:	425		2013:	1479	
1994:	369		2014:	1580	
1995:	316		2015:	1336	
1996:	523		2016:	2104	
1997:	682		2017:	1749	
1998:	597		2018:	1927	
1999:	776	508	2019:	1683	1662
2000:	875		2021:	3421	
2001:	823		2022:	2443	
2002:	695		2023:	1780	
			2024:	1727	2343

(Normalize word counts to 1000 words/year.)

# Normalized Topical Word Count

philosophy: 1135	information: 65
psychology: 588	learning: 65
cognitive: 276	linguistics: 63
moral: 223	reasoning: 62
science: 182	knowledge: 62
theory: 181	psychological: 60
cognition: 165	content: 59
consciousness: 152	problem: 55
language: 143	human: 55
perception: 134	attention: 54
social: 133	sciences: 51
children: 107	empirical: 51
mental: 107	belief: 50
neuroscience: 102	models: 49
concepts: 87	conceptual: 49
explanation: 83	intentionality: 48
causal: 80	technology: 48
development: 71	connectionism: 47
representation: 67	understanding: 47

# Most Common Names

- These reflect mainly being author or co-author of a talk or poster, and sometimes chairs or subjects.

# Most Common Surnames: Non-Normalized

lombrozo: 58

phillips: 43

cushman: 42

knobe: 39

brigard: 37

gopnik: 36

nichols: 35

bloom: 34

walker: 32

machery: 32

franklin: 31

davis: 30

young: 30

stanton: 29

wilson: 27

weisberg: 27

tenenbaum: 26

kushnir: 26

# Most Common Surnames: Normalized

dennett: 47  
fodor: 47  
churchland: 39  
gopnik: 37  
millikan: 37  
kitcher: 34  
wilson: 33  
goldman: 32  
dretske: 32  
lombrozo: 32

block: 31  
gulick: 31  
walker: 30  
harnad: 30  
anderson: 29  
bechtel: 28  
bloom: 28  
clark: 27  
eckardt: 27  
knobe: 27

# Outline

1. Data

2. Topics

\*3. Trends

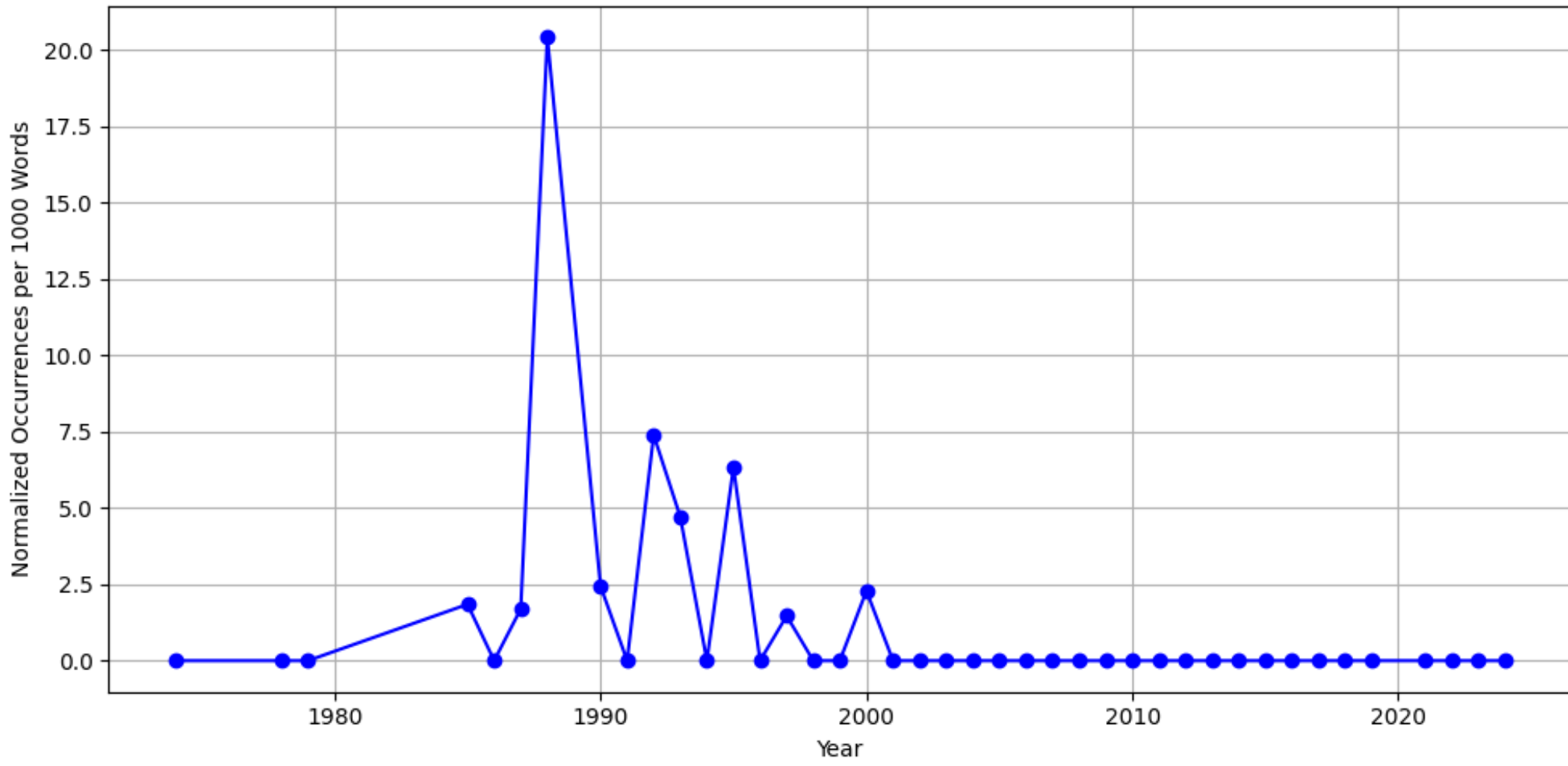
4. Identity

# 1974-2002 Topics

(Ratio: 1974-2002 / 2003-2024)

connectionism: 15.0  
ethology: 8.0  
pictures: 6.0  
psychopathology: 6.0  
narrow: 5.0  
relativity: 4.0  
images: 4.0  
neurology: 4.0  
induction: 4.0  
innate: 3.0  
psychoanalytic: 3.0  
drawing: 3.0  
machines: 3.0  
revolution: 3.0  
mathematics: 3.0  
connectionist: 2.7  
individualism: 2.5

# “CONNECTIONIS\*”





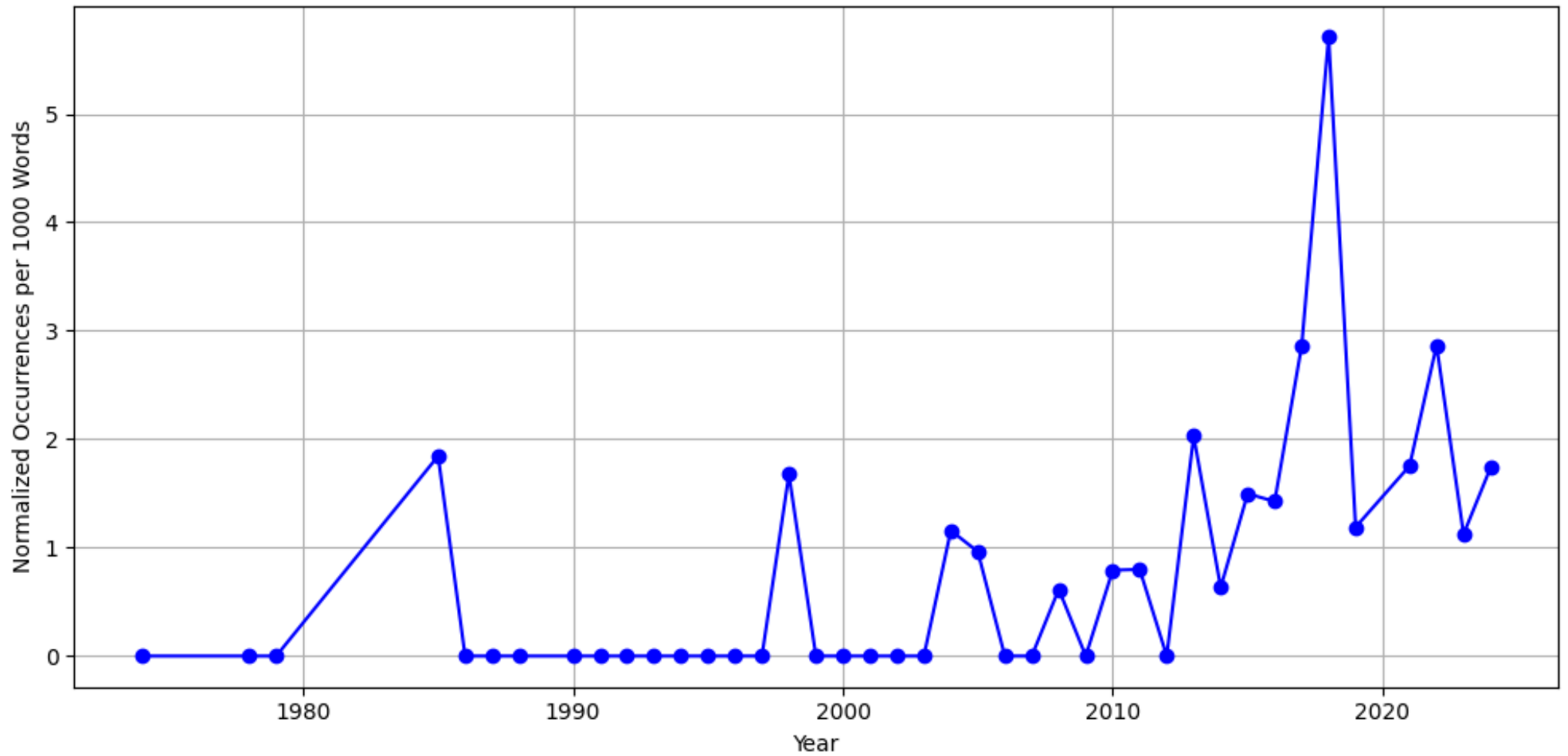
# 2003-2024 Topics

(Ratio: 2003-2024 / 1974-2002)

epistemic: 52.0  
responsibility: 44.0  
experimental: 44.0  
judgment/s: 36.0  
effect/s: 34.0  
moral: 31.8  
cultural: 31.0  
agency: 29.0  
inferences: 28.0  
bayesian: 26.0  
counterfactual: 26.0  
actions: 26.0  
empathy: 25.0  
punishment: 25.0  
virtue: 24.0  
decision: 24.0

speech: 23.0  
attitudes: 22.0  
intuitive: 21.0  
implicit: 21.0  
essentialism: 21.0  
extended: 20.0  
agents: 20.0  
character: 20.0  
reasons: 20.0  
value: 20.0  
gender: 20.0  
structural: 19.0  
emotional: 19.0  
norms: 19.0  
world: 19.0  
distinction: 19.0

# “EPISTEMIC”



# Common Words By Decade

## (Ratio: Decade/All)

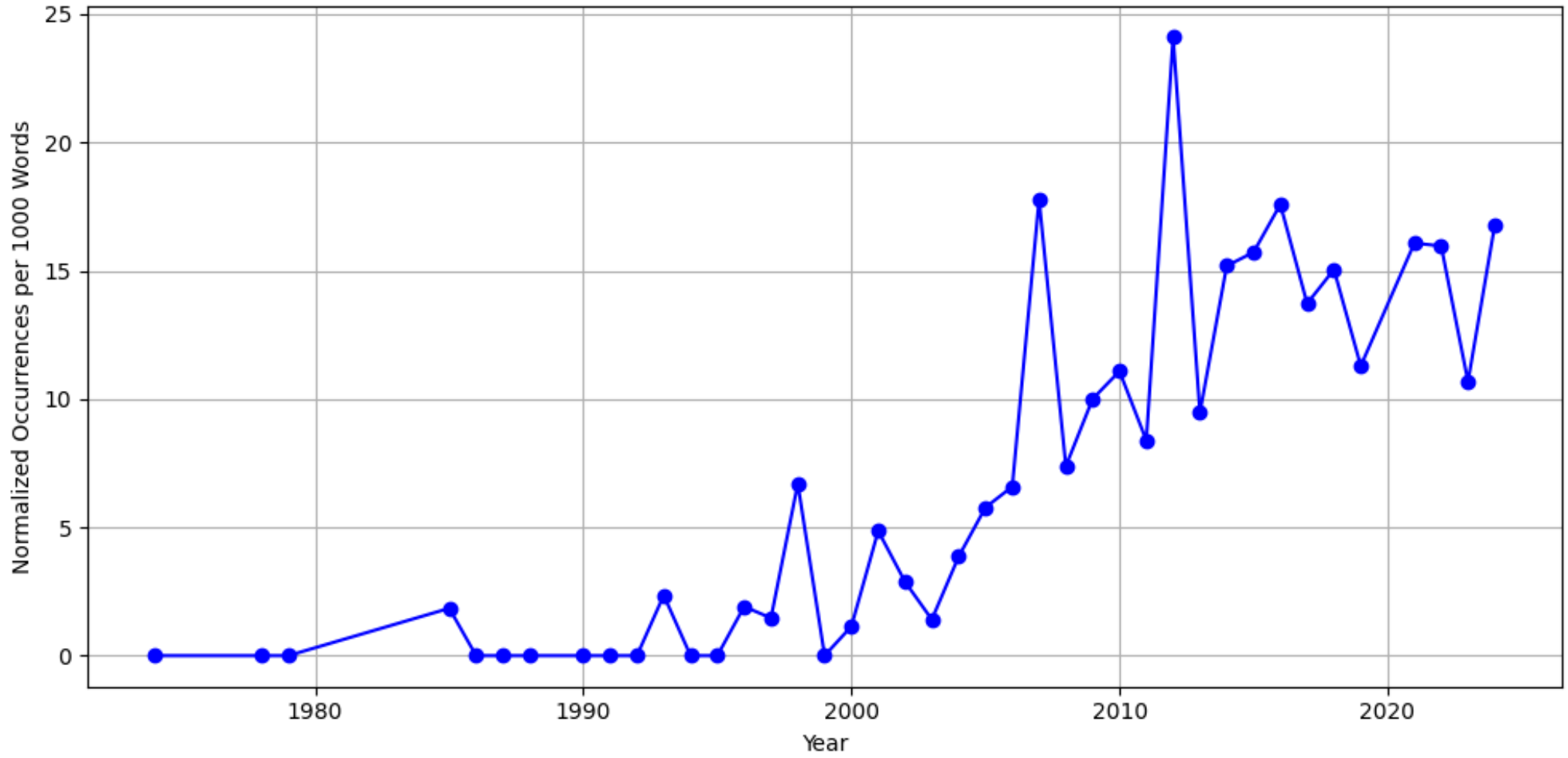
1970s	1980s	1990s
motivation: 5.44	narrow: 3.60	connectionism: 4.8
structures: 5.37	category: 3.06	computer: 3.35
functional: 3.52	conception: 3.00	linguistics: 3.08
models: 2.78	naturalistic: 3.00	architecture: 2.83
concept: 2.43	epistemology: 2.64	ethology: 2.78
processing: 2.27	connectionism: 2.60	psychiatry: 2.70
2000s	2010s	2020s
realization: 4.14	counterfactual: 3.74	norms: 4.64
color: 2.88	effects: 3.64	agency: 3.82
history: 2.83	actions: 3.51	inferences: 3.40
biology: 2.55	bayesian: 3.40	object: 3.40
thought: 2.49	effect: 3.12	thinking: 3.28
extended: 2.38	judgment: 3.06	infants: 3.00
experimental: 2.38	virtue: 3.06	judgments: 2.99

# Correlations (Year vs. Occurrences that Year)

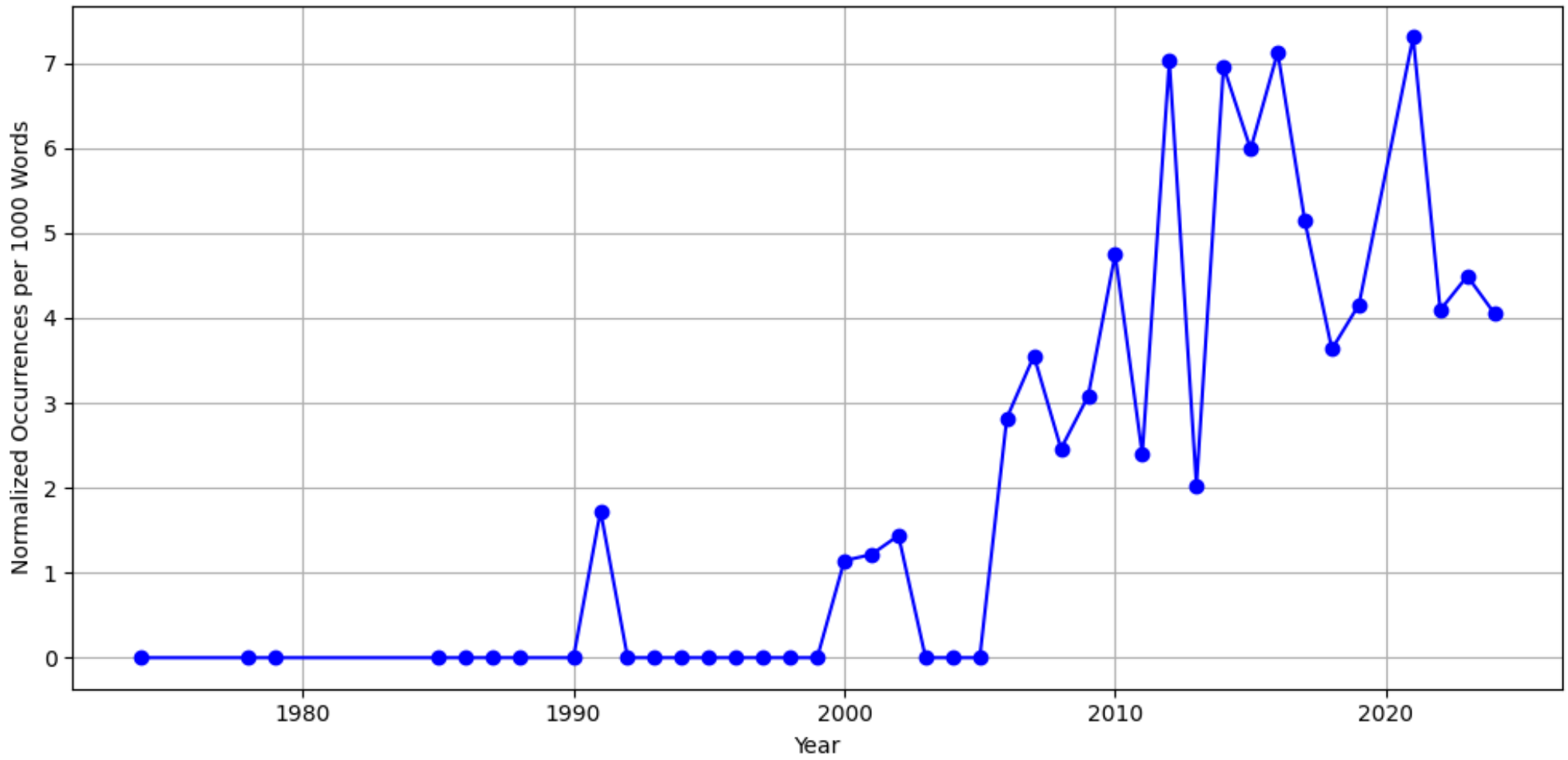
moral: 0.7954  
judgments: 0.6835  
judgment: 0.6738  
effects: 0.6581  
evidence: 0.6466  
children: 0.6389  
understanding: 0.6352  
agency: 0.6138  
norms: 0.5830  
cultural: 0.5739  
belief: 0.5698  
counterfactual: 0.5632  
epistemic: 0.5571  
morality: 0.5567  
object: 0.5564  
model: 0.5477  
human: 0.5441  
actions: 0.5217

information: -0.2307  
motivation: -0.1989  
intentionality: -0.1977  
functional: -0.1879  
connectionism: -0.1684  
logic: -0.1619  
processing: -0.1608  
psychology: -0.1504  
models: -0.1424  
connectionist: -0.1398  
computer: -0.1285  
narrow: -0.1268  
intentional: -0.1265  
ethology: -0.1257  
categorization: -0.1214  
semantics: -0.1205  
naturalistic: -0.1171  
linguistics: -0.1165

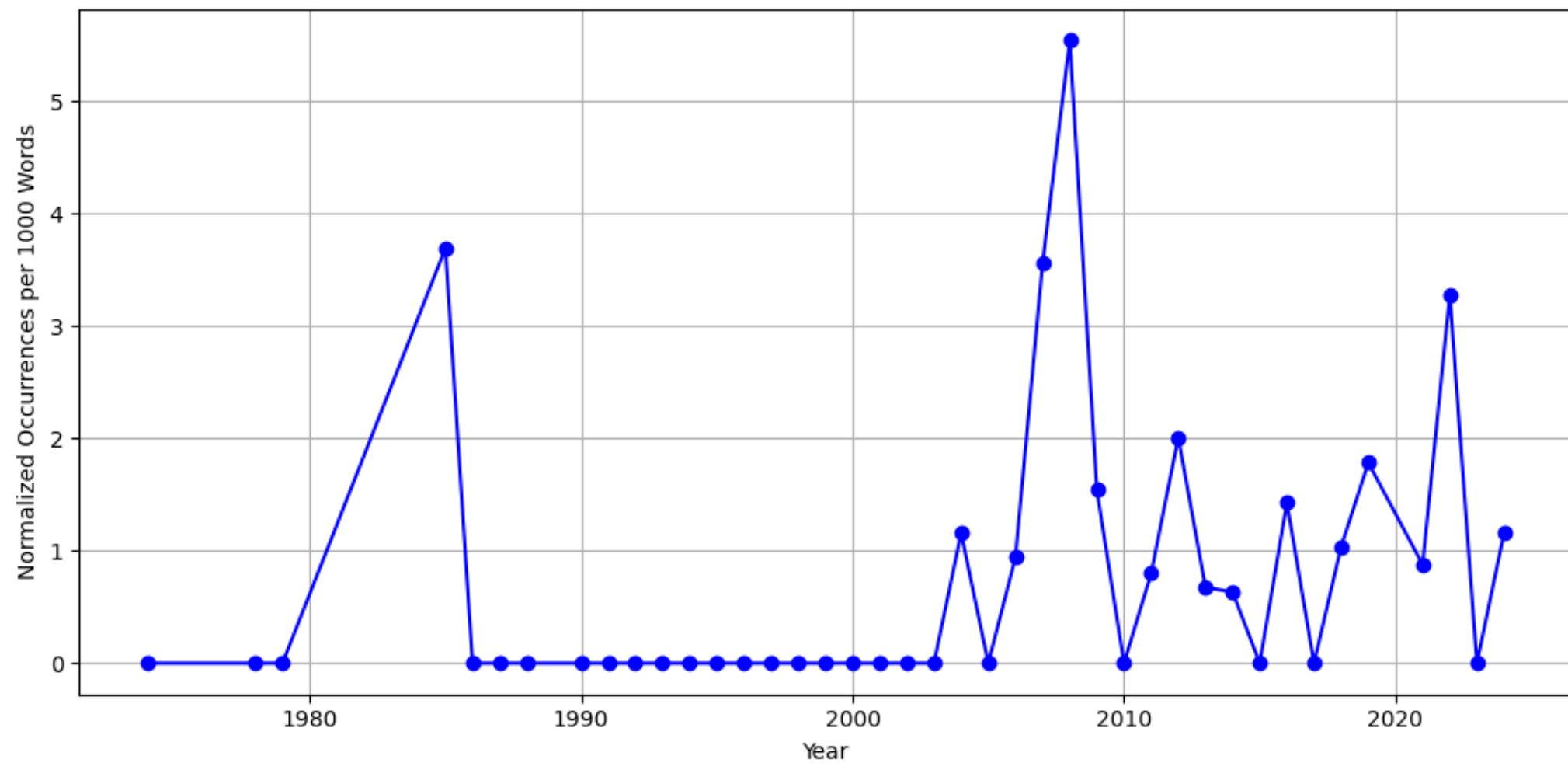
# MORAL



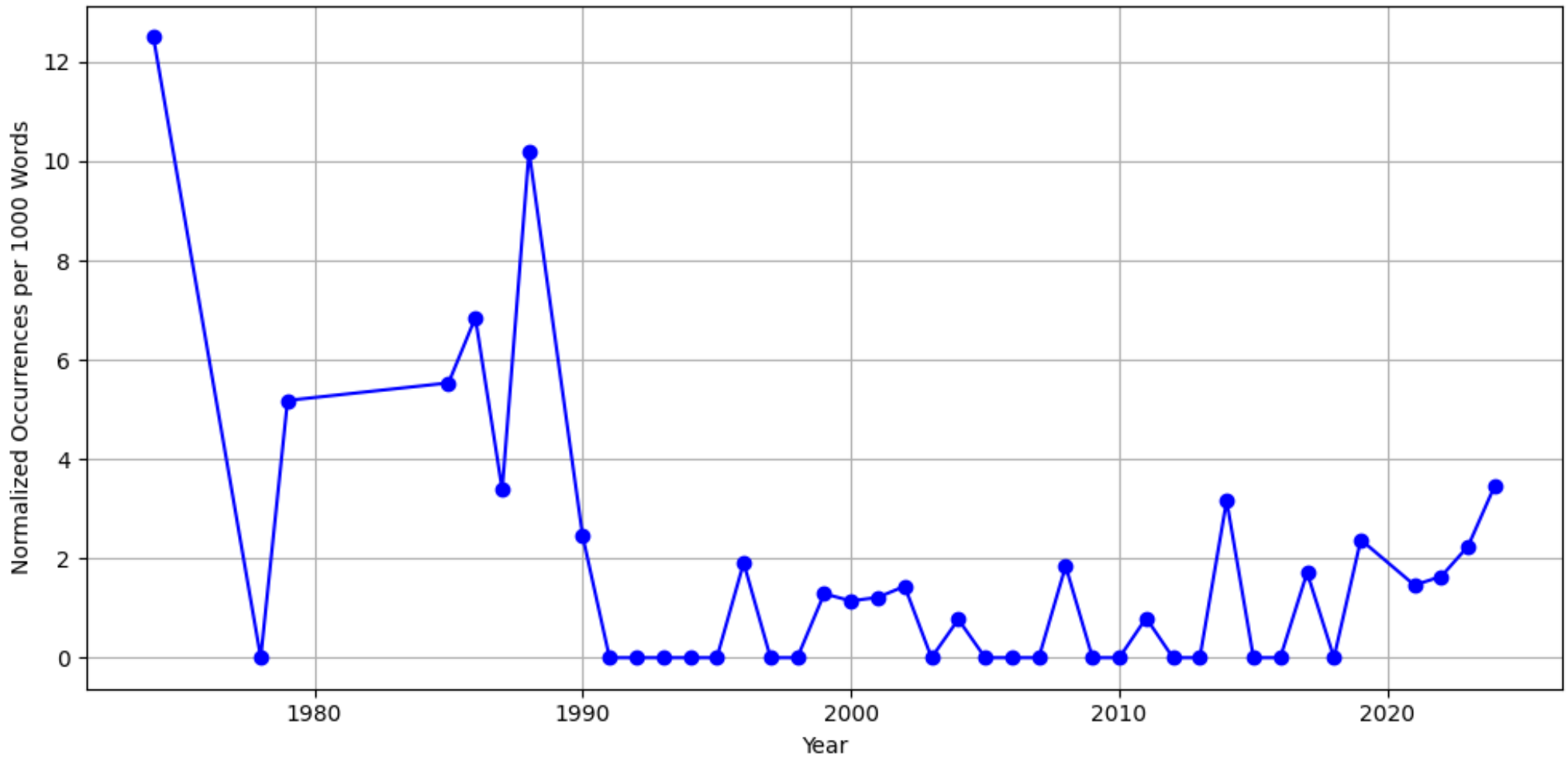
# JUDGMENT



# EXPERIMENTAL

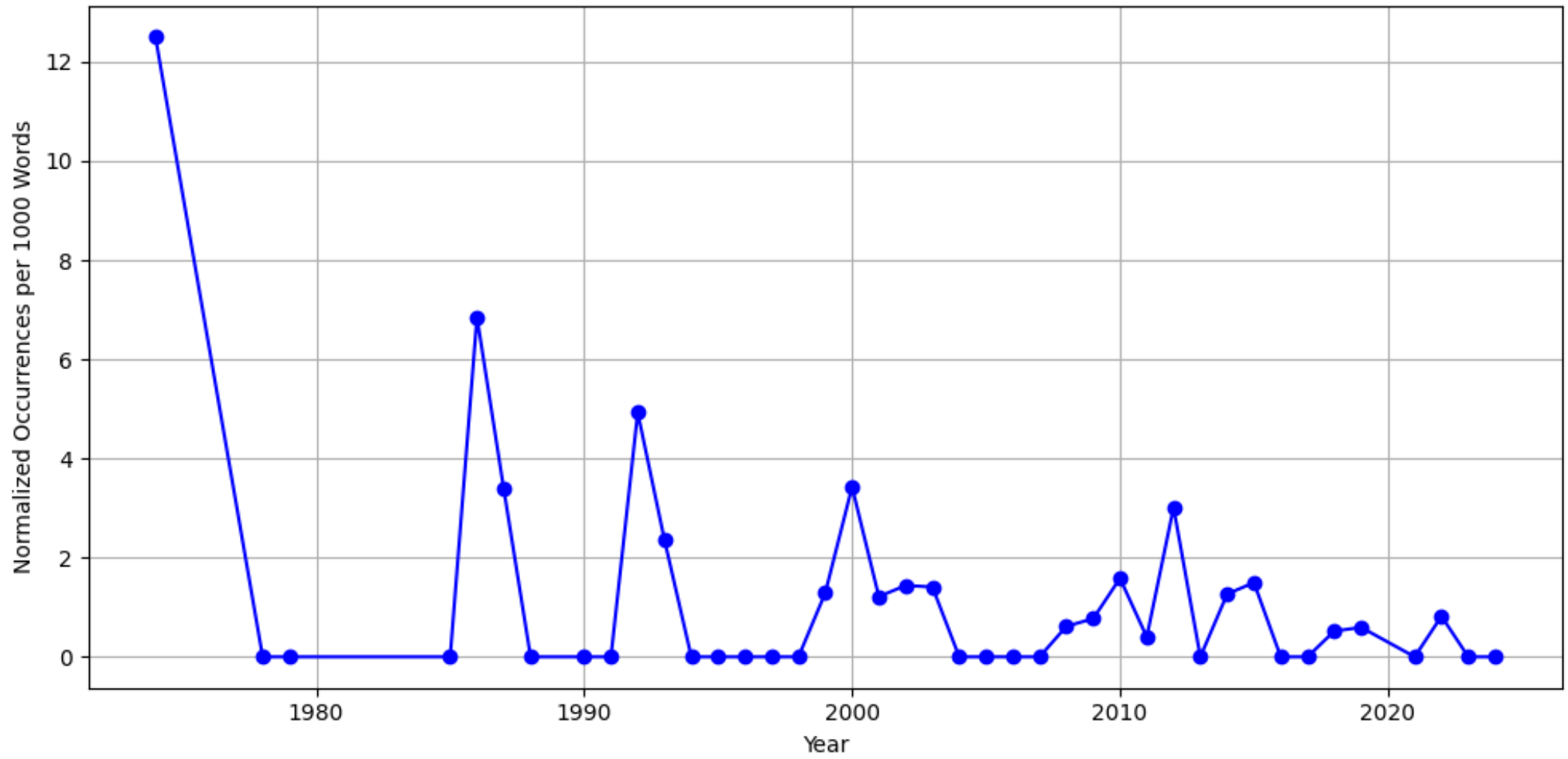


# INFORMATION

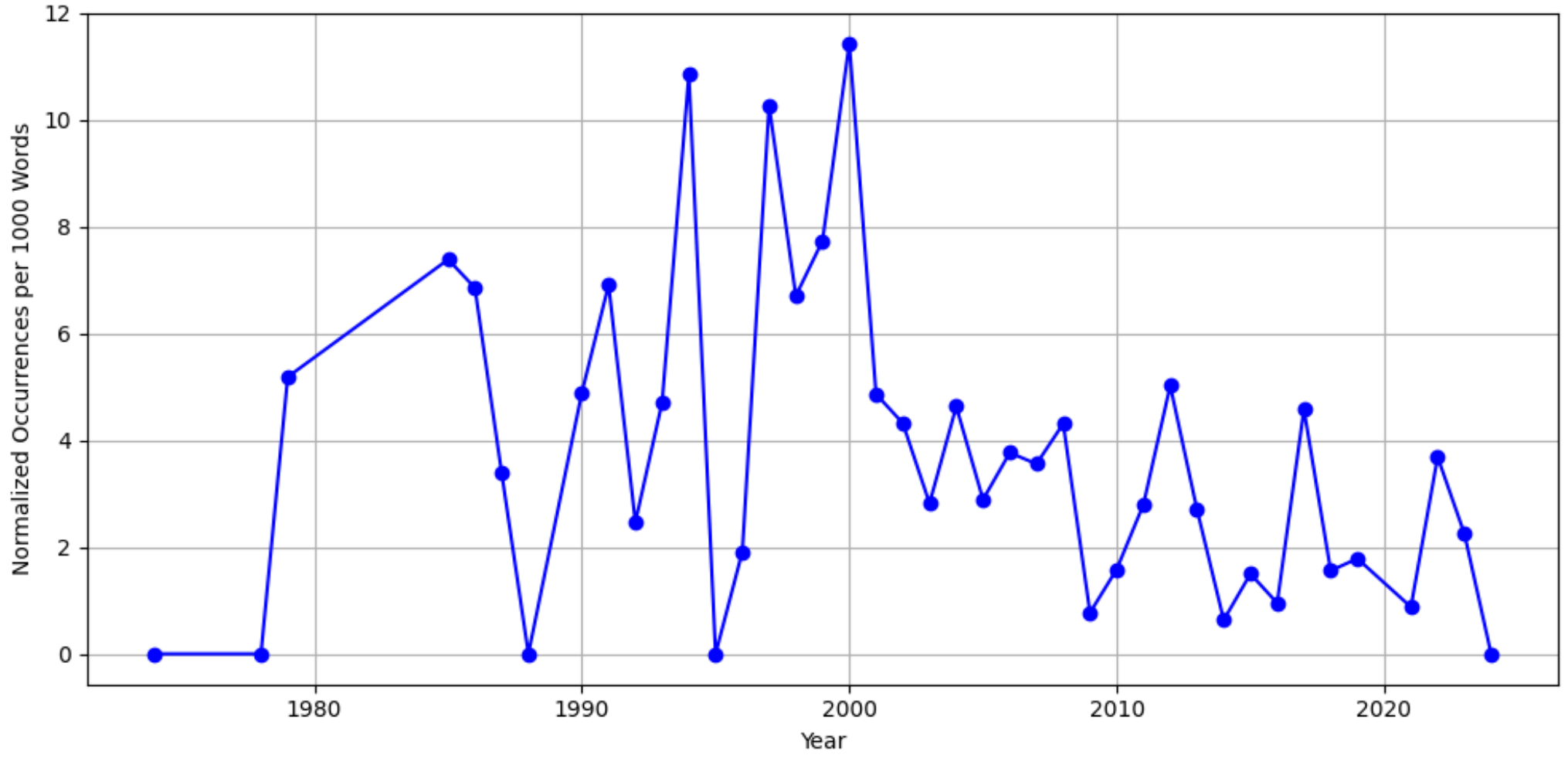




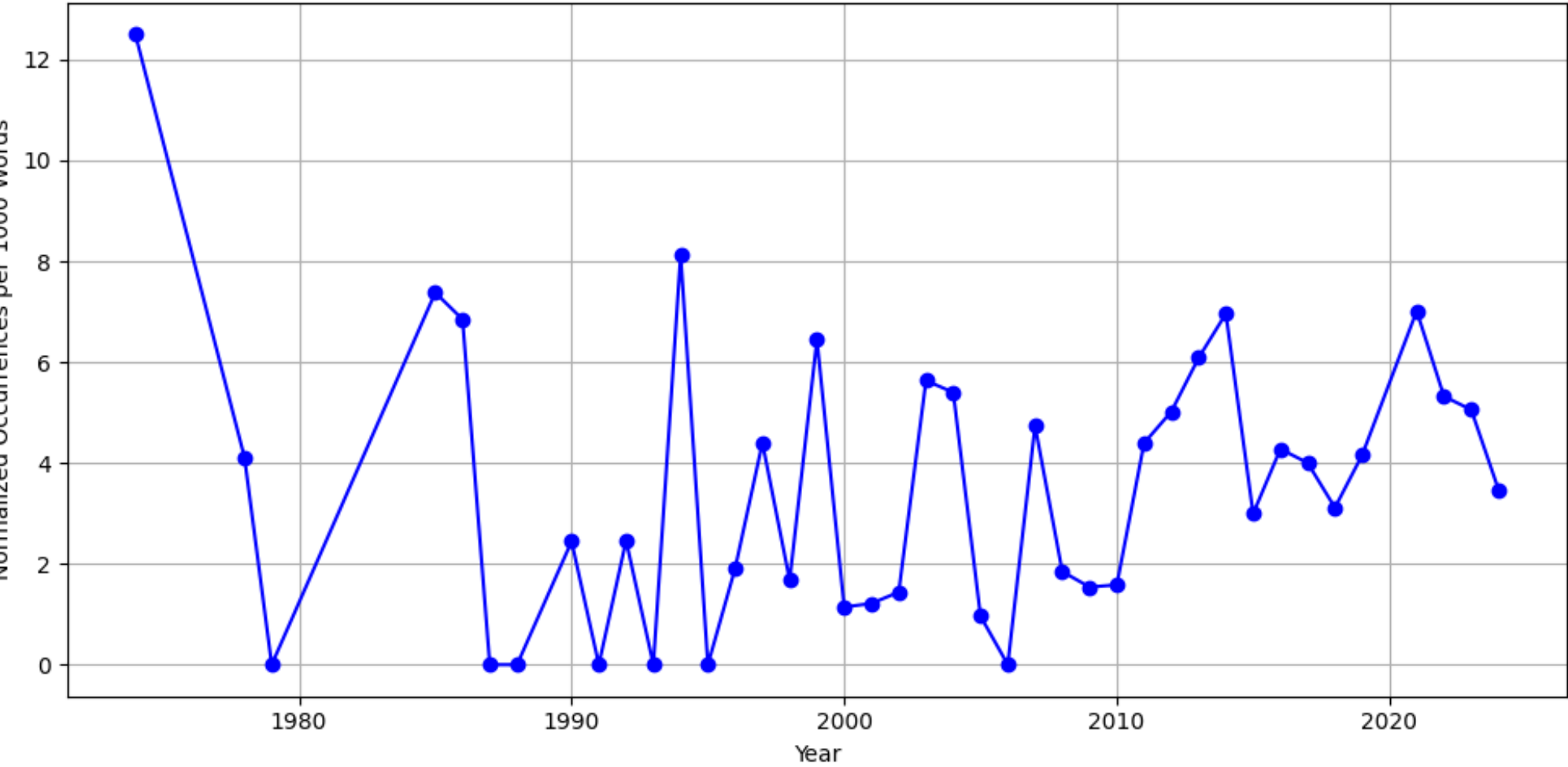
# INTENTIONALITY



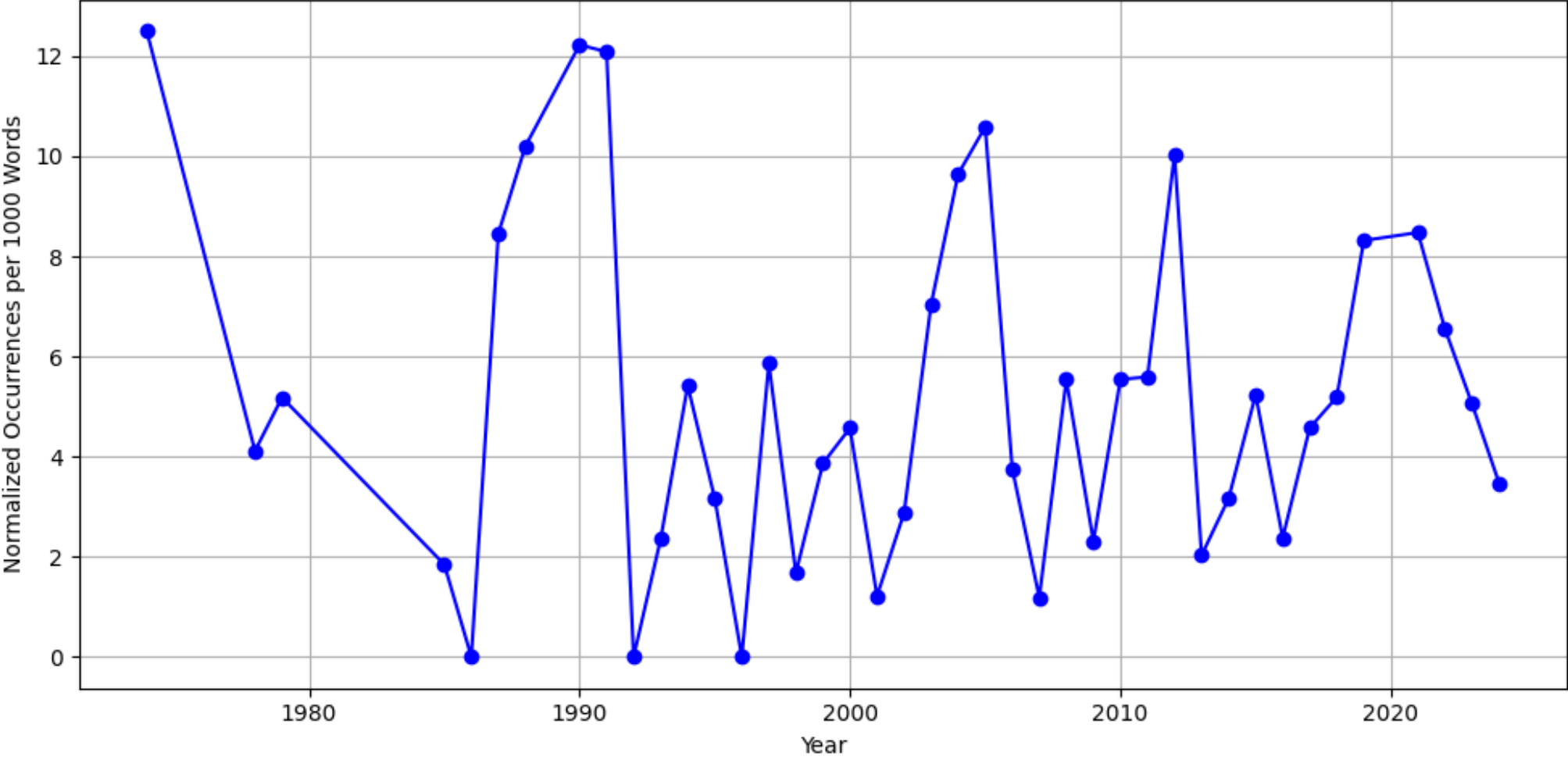
# CONSCIOUSNESS



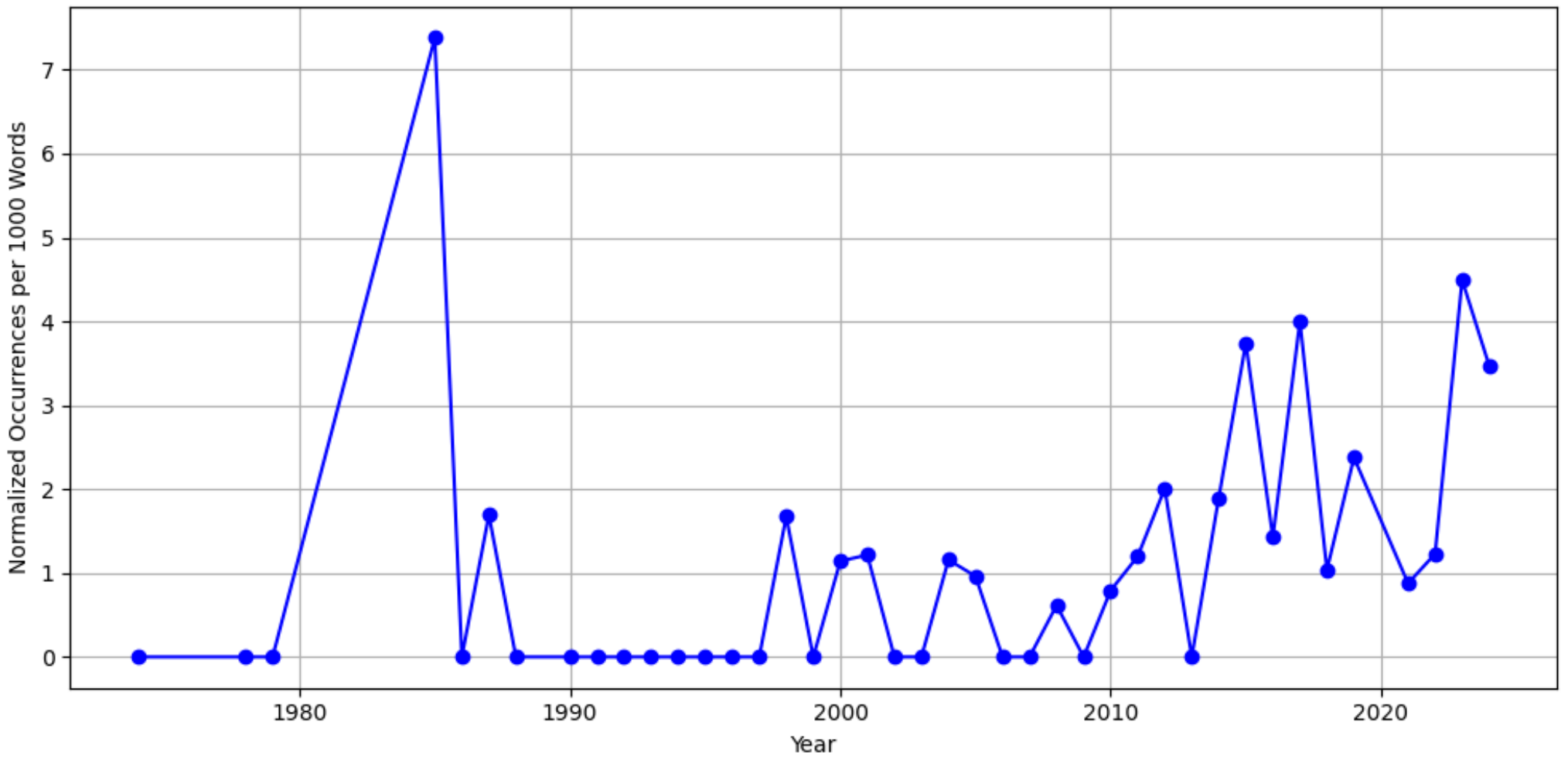
# PERCEPTION



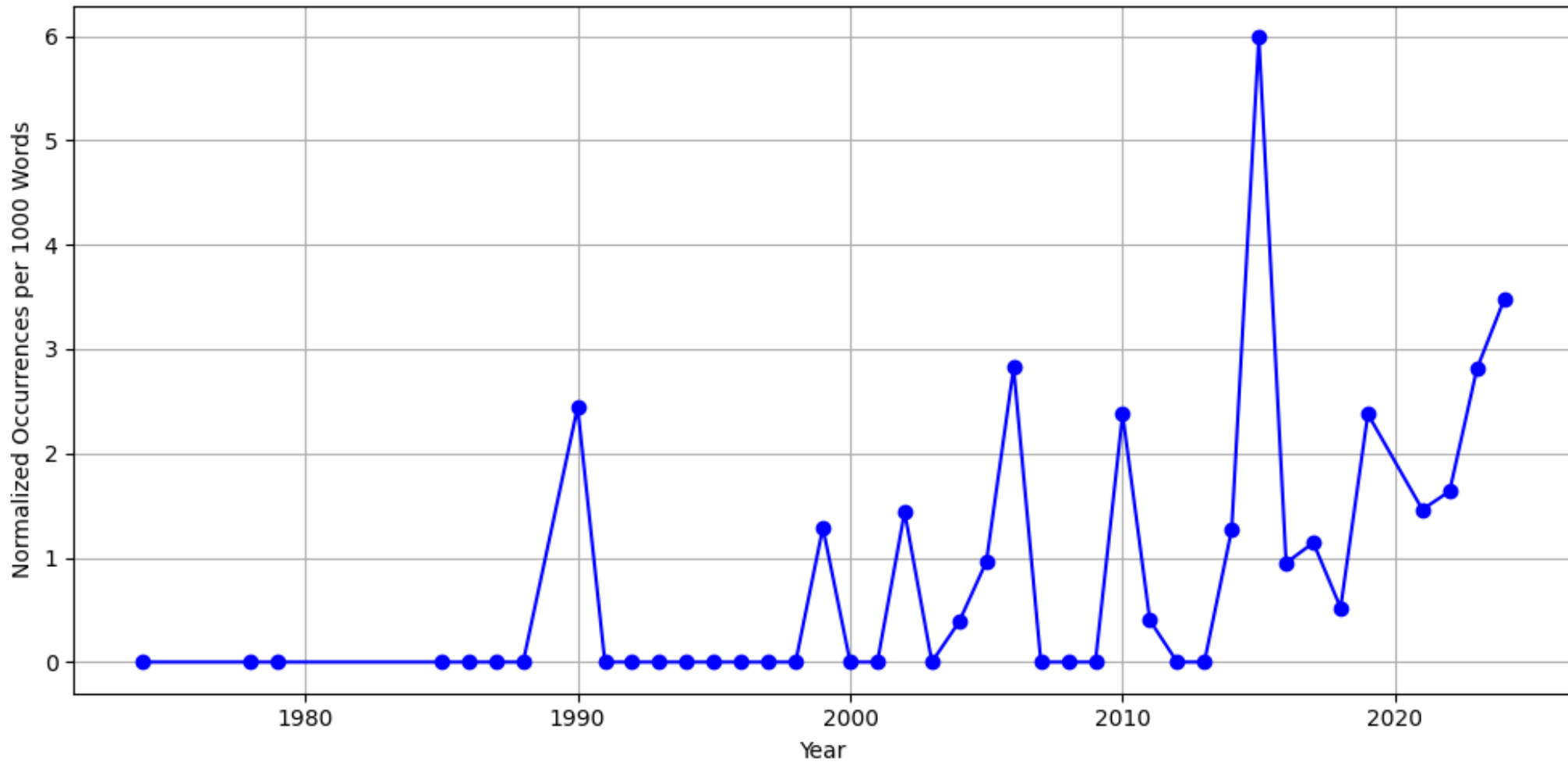
# CONCEPT



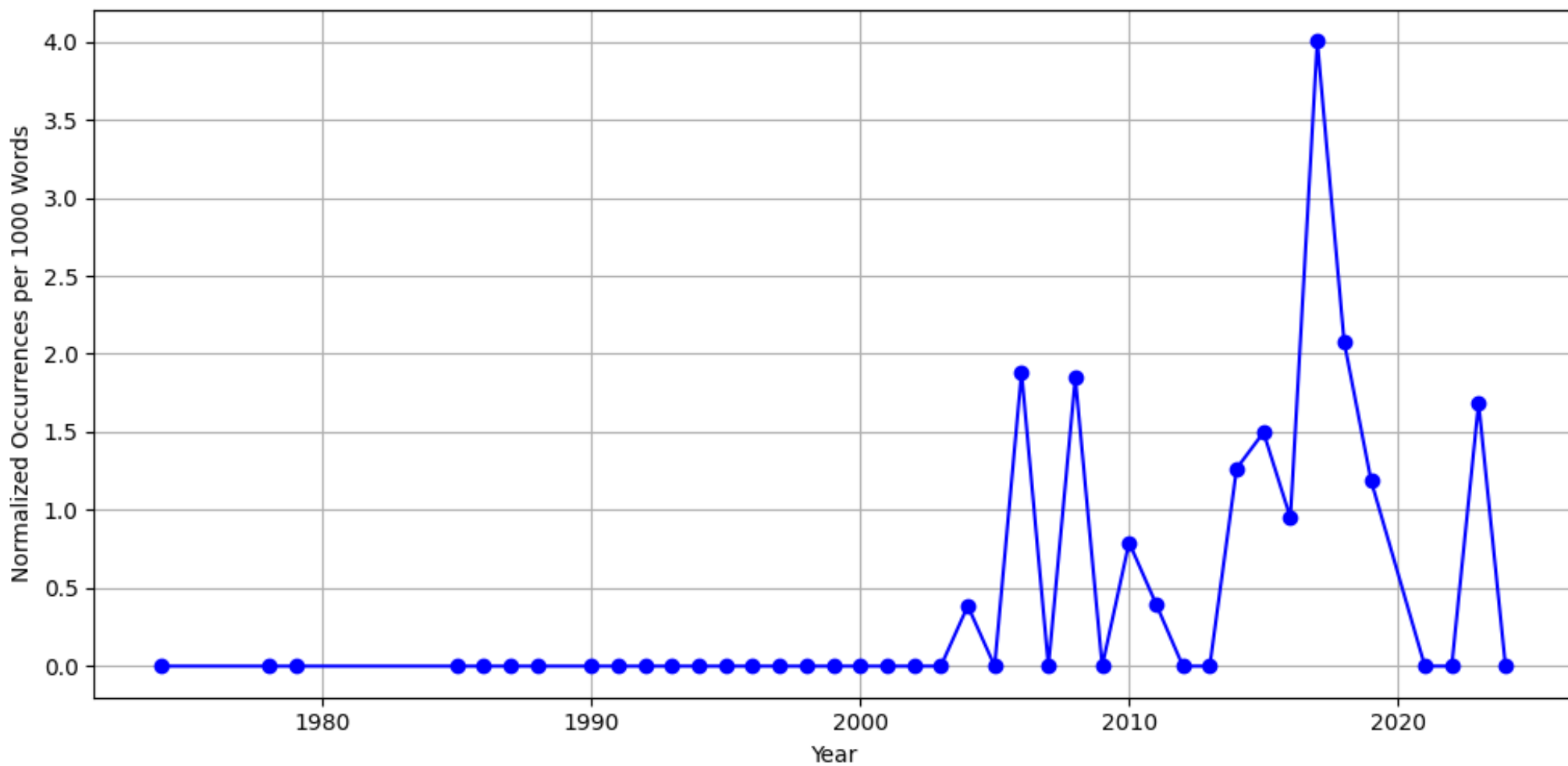
# MEMORY



# IMAGIN



# BAYES



# Outline

1. Data

2. Topics

3. Trends

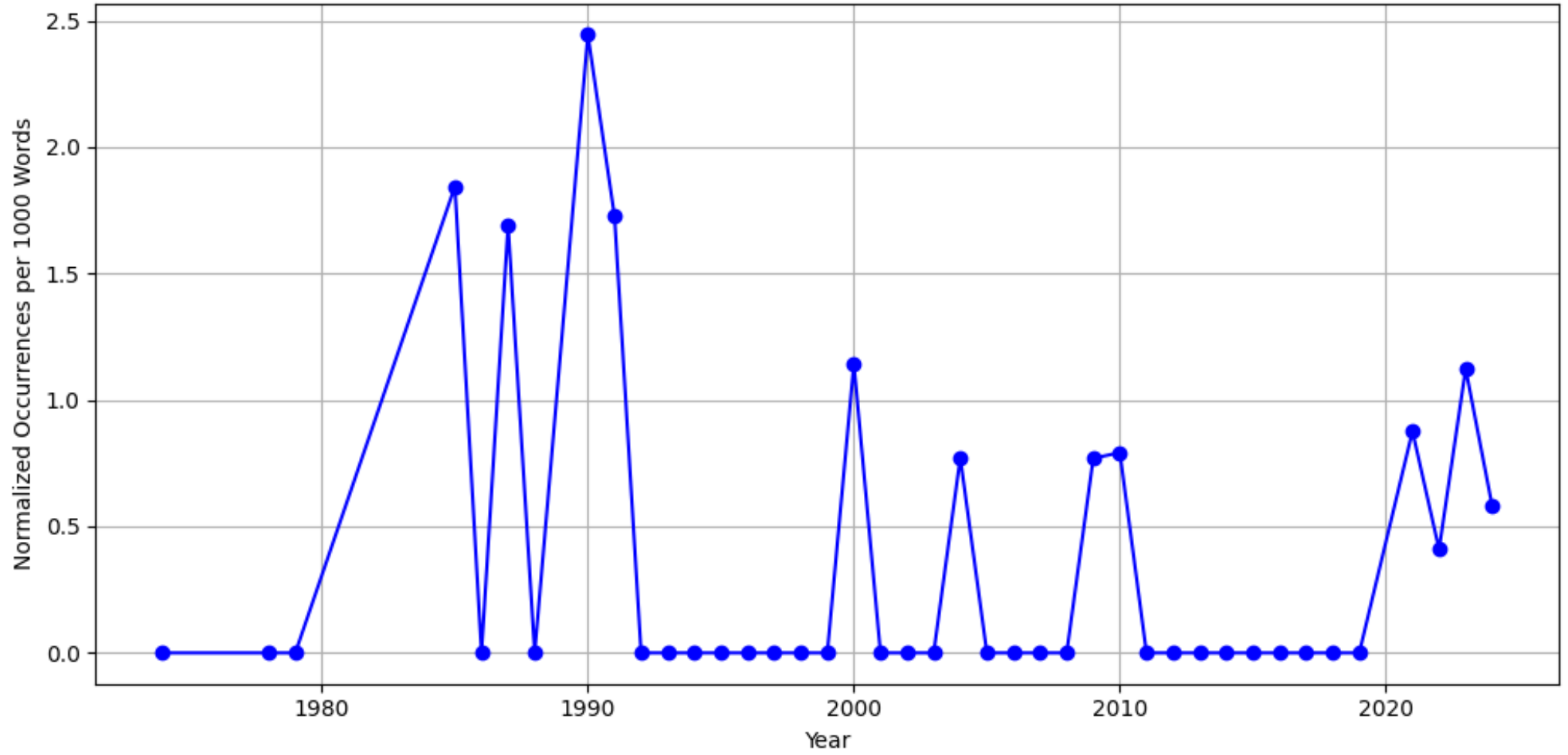
\*4. Identity



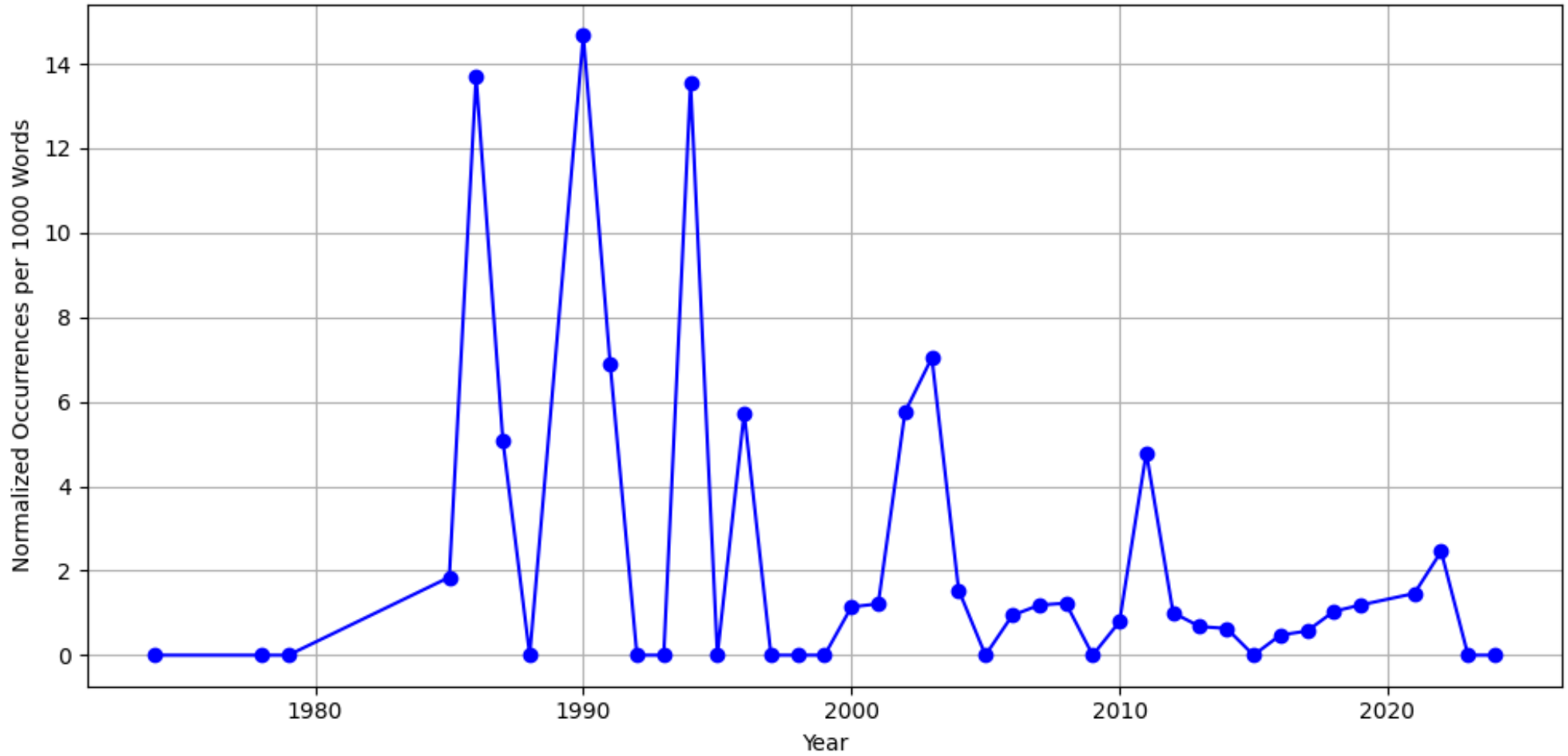
# What is SPP?

- What is SPP? What is it made of?
- What is the balance between philosophy, psychology, and other disciplines such as AI, neuroscience, and linguistics?

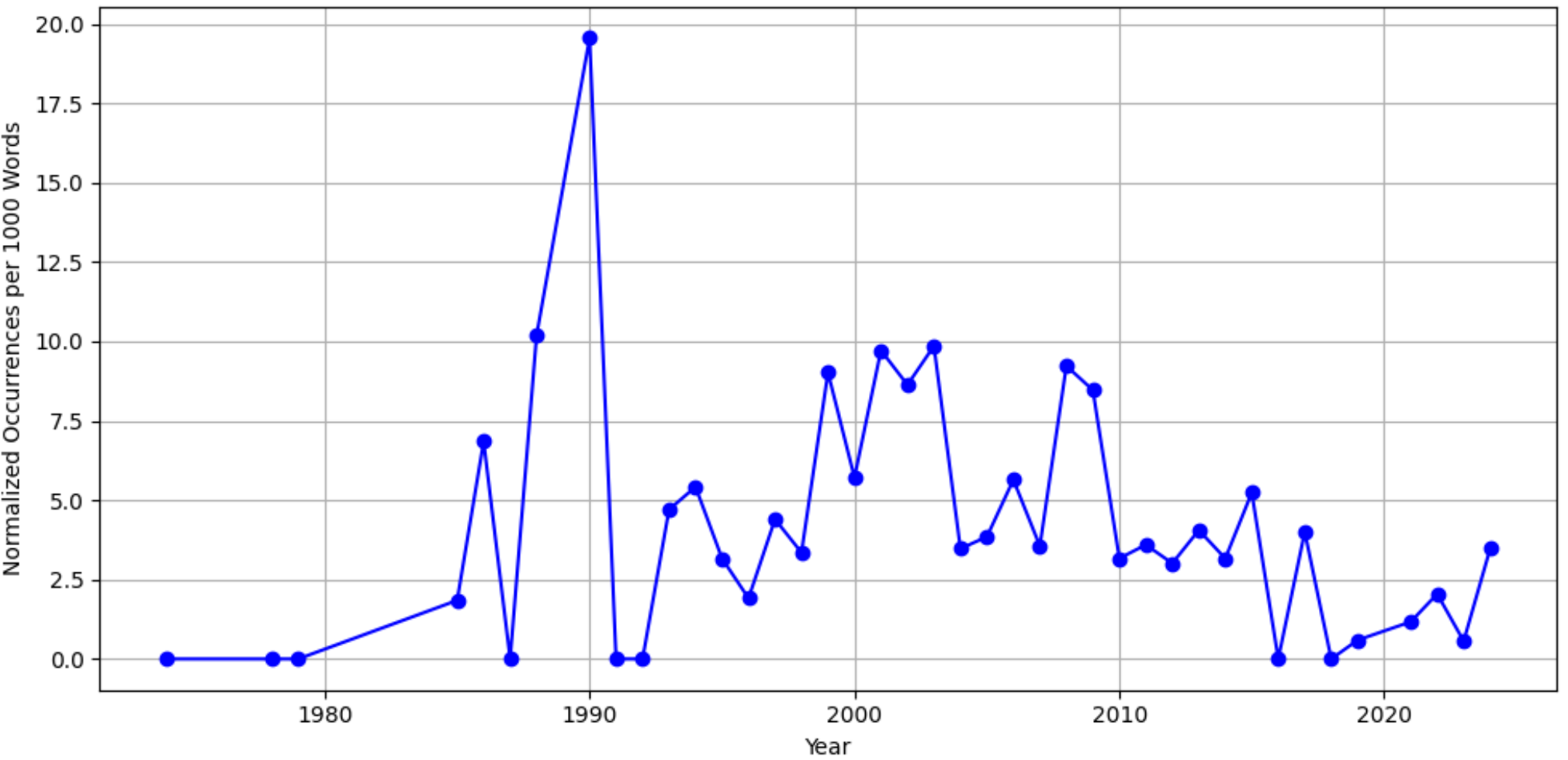
# “ARTIFICIAL”



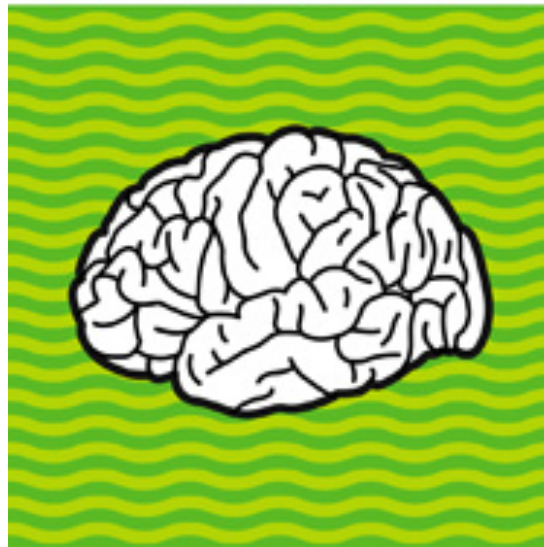
# “LINGUIST\*”



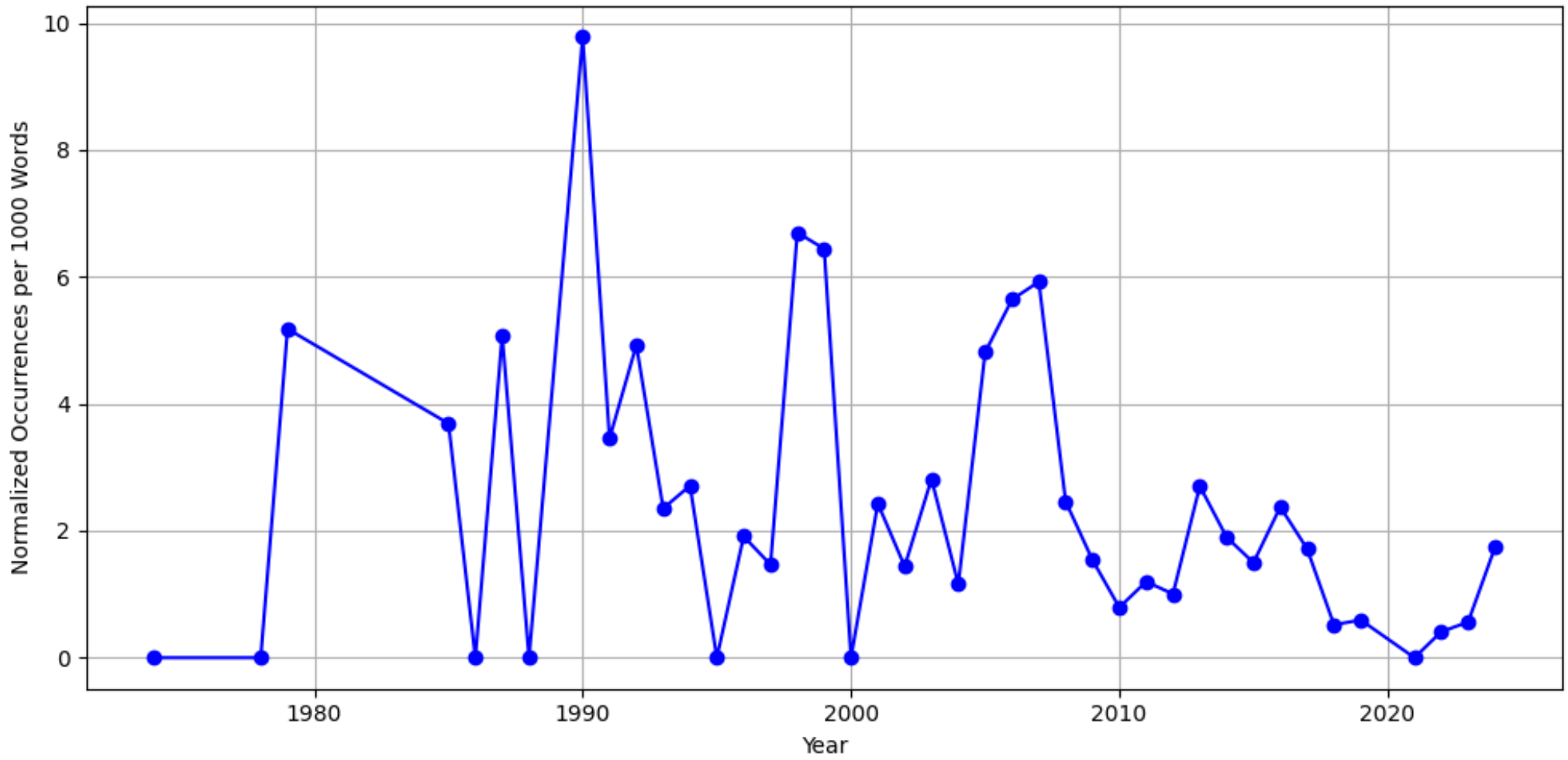
# “NEURO\*”



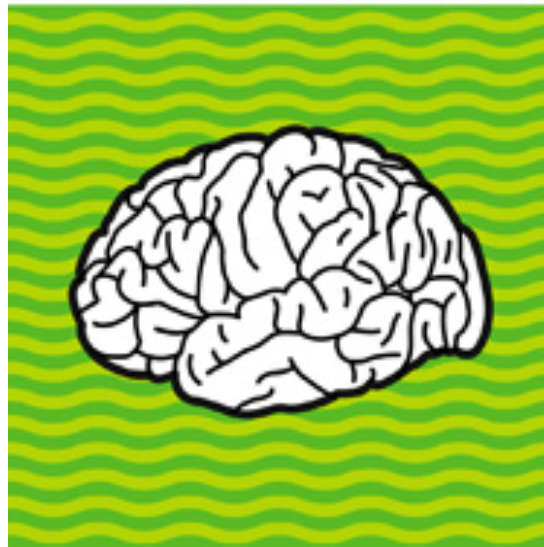
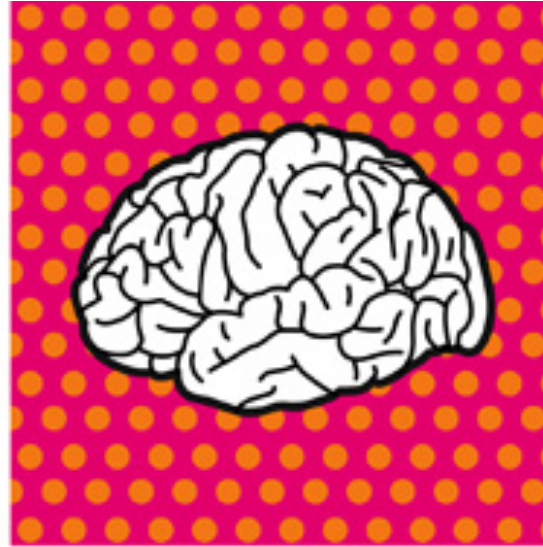
# Current SPP Logo



# BRAIN



# Time for a New Logo?



# SPP Presidents

* 1976 Jerry Fodor	Φ		2000 Terry Horgan	Φ	
1977 William Alston	Φ		2001 Paul Smolensky		L
1978 Paul Secord		Ψ	2002 Robert van Gulick	Φ	
1979 Ned Block	Φ		2003 Barbara von Eckhardt	Φ	
1980 Richard Brandt	Φ		2004 Frank Keil		Ψ
1981 Daniel Dennett	Φ		2005 George Graham	Φ	
1982 Zenon Pylyshyn		Ψ	2006 Paul Bloom		Ψ
1983 Stephen Stich	Φ		2007 David Sanford	Φ	
1984 Susan Carey		Ψ	2008 Lila Gleitman		Ψ
1985 Patricia Churchland	Φ		2009 Colin Allen	Φ	
1986 Fred Dretske	Φ		2010 Betram Malle		Ψ
1987 Stevan Harnad		Ψ	2011 Louise Antony	Φ	
1988 Alvin Goldman	Φ		2012 Brian Scholl		Ψ
1989 William Lycan	Φ		2013 Michael Devitt	Φ	
1990 Paul Churchland	Φ		2014 Alan Leslie		Ψ
1991 Ray Jackendoff		L	2015 Tamar Gendler	Φ	
1992 Patricia Kitcher	Φ		2016 Laurie Santos		Ψ
1993 Ruth Millikan	Φ		2017 Shaun Nichols	Φ	
1994 Owen Flanagan	Φ		2018 Susan Gelman		Ψ
1995 Alison Gopnik		Ψ	2019 Adina Roskies	Φ	
1996 William Bechtel	Φ		2020-2021** Tania Lombrozo		Ψ
1997 Marcel Kinsbourne		N	2022 Steven Gross	Φ	
1998 Robert McCauley	Φ		2023 Tamar Kushnir		Ψ
1999 Brian Cantwell Smith		C	2024 Edouard Machery	Φ	
			2025 Andrew Shtulman		Ψ



# SPP Identity

Phase 1 (1974-1989): Society for *Philosophy* and Psychology.

Phase 2: (1990-2002): Society for Philosophy and Cognitive Science (my formative SPP years!).

Phase 3: (2003-?): Society for (Equally) Philosophy and Psychology.

?Phase 4: (...) Society for Philosophy and *Psychology*. [See following slides.]

# Other Cognitive Sciences

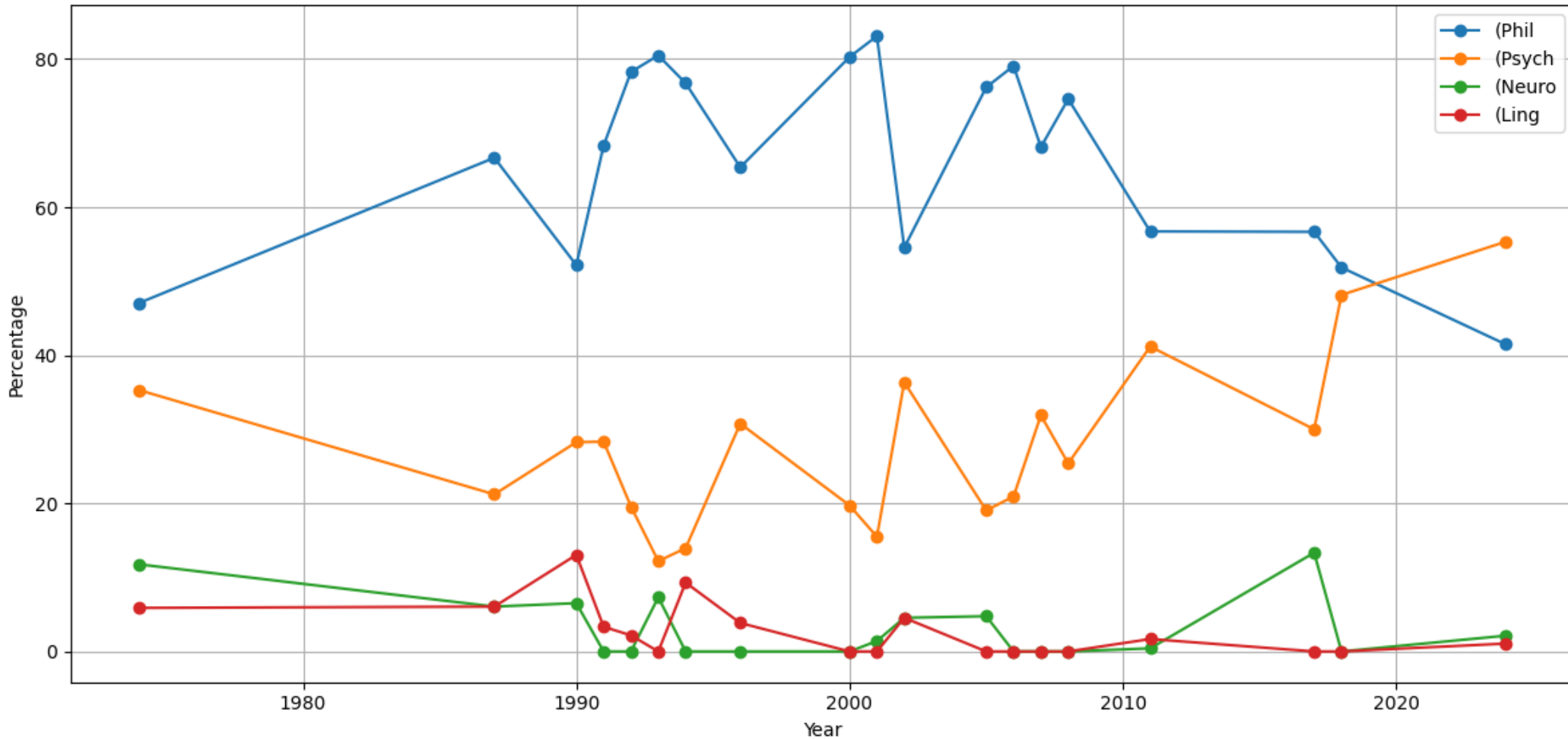
- The fall-off in linguistics, neuroscience, and perhaps AI at SPP may correlate with new meetings there. (Question: which came first, the fall-off or the new groups?)
- There's now a Society for Philosophy of AI, an Association for the Philosophy of Language, and some phil/neuro meetings.
- Next: a Society for Philosophy and Neuroscience?

# Speaker Affiliation: Philosophy vs Psychology

- Only a few programs have data about speaker departmental affiliations.
- I've used those (with some massaging) and filled in manually for 1974 and 2024.
- This information is inexact and patchy (many years have affiliations only for some sessions) and just gives a very general idea.
- [N.B. The next ten slides or so are an addition to my 2024 SPP presentation.]

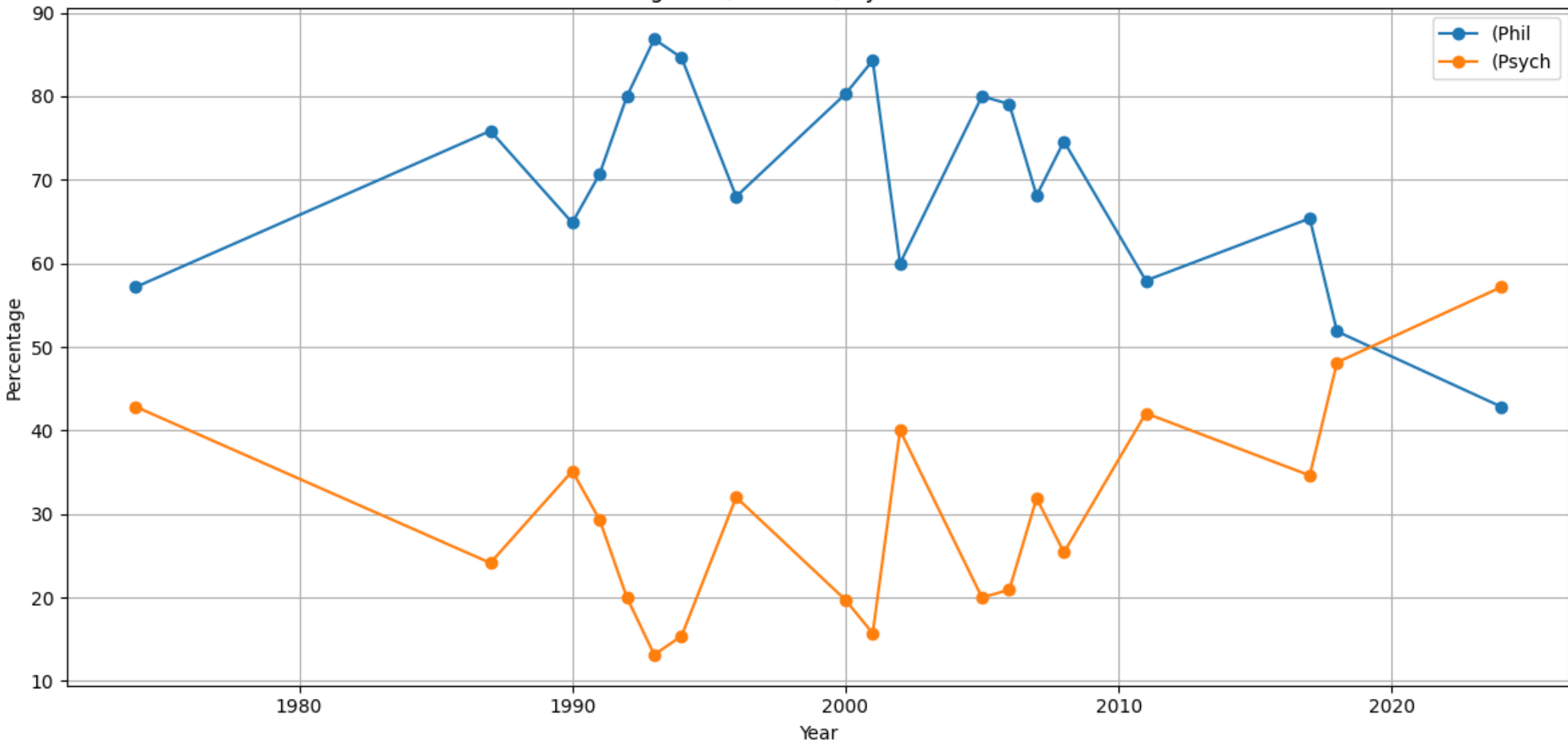
# Speaker Affiliations (Normalized)

Percentage of "(Phil", "(Psych", "(Neuro", and "(Ling" Over the Years



# Philosophy vs Psychology

Percentage of "(Phil" vs "(Psych" Over the Years



# The Rise of Psychology in SPP

- Psychology has gone from ~20% of the program (1980-2000) to 30% (2000s), 40-50% (2010s), and nearly 60% (2024).
- What has brought about this growth?
- To dig deeper, I'll look at the 2024 program (focusing especially on the concurrent programs).

# 2024 Statistics

- Invited talks (keynotes, symposia, presidential and prize addresses): 7 philosophers, 6 psychologists, 1 each from neuroscience, AI, linguistics
- Concurrent talks (by affiliation of first author): 28 philosophy, 43 psychology, 1 neuroscience.
- Posters: Roughly 2-1 psychology-philosophy?
- Caveat: Breakdown is inexact, and I have no data on whether this is typical of recent years.

# Psychology Breakdown (2024 Concurrent Talks)

- philosophical psychology (psychology of judgments in “philosophical” domains): ~38
  - moral psychology (~14)
  - epistemic psychology (~13)
  - modal (3) temporal (3) theory of mind (3) misc (2)
  - many of these developmental (~15)
- other psychology speakers: ~5
  - AI (3) vision (2)



# Philosophy Breakdown (2024 Concurrent Talks)

- philosophical psychology: 8
  - moral (6) epistemic (2)
- philosophy of psychology/mind/cogsci: 20
  - neuro (4) memory (4) perception (4)  
agency (2) thought (2) misc (4)  
[consciousness (0)]
  - ~50-50 phil of psych/cogsci and  
empirically informed phil of mind

# 2024 Concurrent Program: Overall

- 43 psychology speakers, 28 philosophy
- 48 philosophical psychology: 40 psychology speakers, 8 philosophy
- 25 phil of psych/cogsci/mind: 20 philosophy, 8 psychology)=

# Hypothesis/ Observation

- SPP has become a “home” conference for many researchers in philosophical psychology (2/3 of the concurrent program, up from ~0 in 1999).
- Numerous social, developmental, and cognitive psychologists working on these topics, and some (mostly experimental) philosophers.
- There are also smaller groups of philosophers of psychology and of psychologists with foundational interests.
- Few cognitive scientists from other areas, and not too many philosophers of mind or of cognitive science beyond philosophy of psychology.

# Thoughts

- The rise of psychology in SPP reflects (and helps) the growth of philosophical psychology (and to some extent philosophy of psychology) into a robust field.
- The fall-off in other areas of cognitive science may correlate with some fading of the vision of a unified (foundations of) cognitive science, and the rise of specialization?
- [Also, other conferences: ASSC, VSS, etc.]

# Alternative SPP Visions Post-2024

1. Continue the strengthening of philosophical psychology, along with philosophy of psychology.
2. Strengthen philosophy of mind and cognitive science.
3. Strengthen foundational cognitive science: AI, linguistics, neuroscience, ..., and philosophy thereof.
4. <Your vision goes here.>

**Happy Birthday SPP!**